

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



OPEDA Newsletter

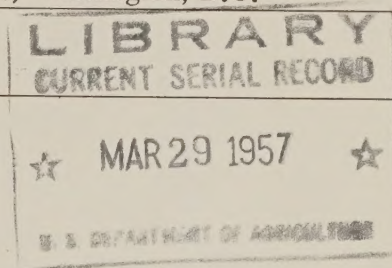
ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES OF THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office: Room 425 Colorado Bldg., 1341 G St., N.W., Washington, D.C. DI 7-4649

Vol. 9 MARCH 1957 No. 2

President: Charles E. Burkhead
Vice-President: E. L. LeClerc
Sec'y.-Treas.: Dorothy Martin
Executive Officer: Dillard B. Lasseter

To:



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all OPEDA members throughout the world! Your Organization is at present very active in looking after your interests. Our three standing committees which comprise over thirty-five top men of USDA, our new Council of 83 members which took office in January, and your Executive Committee are all engaged in carrying out the Organization's twofold objective -- promoting effective public service and representing administrative, technical and scientific employees in matters affecting their welfare. Special attention is being given to your views, as indicated by your replies to our recent questionnaire.

Your officers and staff are ever mindful of members at far-flung field stations and are making every effort to give more members a definite part in furthering the work of OPEDA. We hope, through more frequent newsletters and by direct communication with our many members who write us their suggestions or questions, to bridge the gap between the management and the members. Feel free to write your officers or Council members at any time.

We are proud of our record membership -- 3,927 already paid up for 1957, but we still have far to go to reach our goal of 8,000. Ask your co-workers to join with us for a better Government service, and help us reach that goal. --Charles E. Burkhead, President.

REPORT ON LEGISLATION -- by Dillard B. Lasseter, Executive Officer

Very little change has taken place in the legislative situation since the last Newsletter. The only newsworthy item is S.385, authorizing Federal agencies to assign employees for training purposes to colleges, laboratories, and industrial establishments. OPEDA is backing this bill strongly and will undoubtedly have some influence in its favor. Your Executive Officer testified on behalf of the bill at the hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on March 12.

Federal-State Retirement: Two bills have been introduced, S.578 by Senator Carlson (R.) of Kansas and H.R. 4762 by Rep. Davis (D) of Georgia. A detailed report of this situation has been sent to all contributors to the Educational Fund, but in brief we will say that it is unlikely that any action will be taken on either of the bills within the next 6 weeks. S.578 is restricted to a relatively small group while H.R. 4762 in general has about the same if not wider coverage than S.1041 which was vetoed in 1955. Although the outlook is not too bright at this moment for enactment of this legislation, we feel that we have already made some progress this year. To any member interested, we will send upon request a copy of the amalgamation of the two bills, which the Educational Advisory Committee has favored and hopes to get passed.

Pay Raise: The first encouraging news to Federal employees in some weeks is the decision by the Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee to hold hearings some time in April on proposed pay raises for postal and classified employees. In the opinion of most informed observers, however, chances of Federal pay-raise legislation being approved this year are still rather remote.

We have limited space in our Newsletter for details of legislation, but to any member interested in specific legislation we will send more information on request. Legislation for Federal employees is affected somewhat by the change in membership of the Civil Service Commission. Messrs. Young and Moore have left the Commission, and Messrs. Ellsworth and Phillips, their nominated successors, have not yet been confirmed by the Senate. This, together with the understandable delay incurred by new officials in acquainting themselves with their jobs, will certainly have an impeding effect.

(over)

JOE YOUNG'S PREDICTIONS AT OPEDA LUNCHEON

Joe Young, Federal columnist for The Evening Star, spoke to a record crowd at both OPEDA luncheon forums in February. Saying, "It is rather foolhardy to make long-range predictions about what Congress is going to do and not going to do," he nevertheless gave the outlook as he saw it. He thought the chances for a pay raise this year remote, with better chances next year. He also stated that "pay increase for engineers and scientists and other professional employees is also clouded." This was in reference to the special committee appointed by Congress and headed by Ralph Cordiner, president of General Electric. The Committee's report proposed an increase in salaries in grade 7 and above for defense agency employees, but would of necessity extend to other Federal workers in similar grades. In view of the President's anti-inflation drive, a coolness on the part of the Administration is expected.

Mr. Young predicted better chances for Health Insurance legislation, saying it could be the major employee legislation of the year, and good chances for the training legislation. (See Mr. Lasseter's report, above.) A shorter work-week, for which legislation has been introduced, he considered a long-range proposition, as the G.P.O. had just rejected the craft employees' demands for a shorter week.

OPEDA AND GRADUATE SCHOOL TO CO-SPONSOR AUDITORIUM MEETING

OPEDA members and other USDA employees will hear Dr. P.V. Cardon, who resigned last year as Director-General of the Food & Agriculture Organization of the U.N., on Thursday, April 25, at 3 p.m. in the Department Auditorium. The lecture will be sponsored jointly by OPEDA and the Graduate School and may be followed by other outstanding speakers if there is sufficient interest. Dr. Cardon has long been a member of OPEDA, even during his stay in Rome. We are happy to present our distinguished member to a larger group than we can accommodate at our luncheon forums. Mark the date on your calendar now!

ANNUAL DINNER TO BE HELD

Last year's OPEDA dinner in honor of Congressman Cliff Hope was so successful that the Council voted to hold a dinner this year. A committee headed by Milton Bryan (FS) is at work on plans to have the dinner around the middle of May, with an outstanding speaker and an entertainment program. Other members of the committee are: Frances Debnam (ARS), L.I. Jones (FES), Roy Magruder (ARS), Dorothy Scott (F&D), Wm. S. Harris (CSS), Richard G. Schmitt, Jr. (REA), Afif I. Tannous (FAS), G.K. Rule (SCS), and D.B. Lasseter, OPEDA.

ABOUT THOSE QUESTIONNAIRES (Note: This item omitted from last Newsletter due to lack of space)

A tabulation is given below of replies received to the OPEDA Program Inquiry, mailed with the ballots. The results and suggestions made are being considered by the various committees.

No. who checked	Item	No. who checked	Item
	IMPROVED RETIREMENT BENEFITS		SALARY INCREASE
898	For present employees	408	Flat increase
505	For retired employees	714	Tied to cost-of-living index
516	Survivorship benefits	743	Basic revision of salary schedule
606	Credit for Fed.-State service	372	Higher entrance for scientific employee
806	30-year retirement		Revision of basic salary structure for scientific employees
87	Made other suggestions	636	Made other suggestions
	INSURANCE BENEFITS		TRAINING
976	Extended life insurance benefits at retirement	104	Govt. assignment for on-campus training
853	Health insurance	543	Other suggestions
696	Catastrophe medical insurance	87	Development of OPEDA Local Chapters
706	Payroll deductions	332	Non-Veteran Appeal Rights to CSC
428	Development of Increased Prestige for Civil Service		
159	Wrote in other subjects for OPEDA Action	299	
352	Made suggestions on best method of increasing OPEDA membership		

On increasing membership, the majority stressed personal contact. Many asked for local chapters. A New Orleans member recommended: "Take a strong and active stand on matters such as above and continually advertise OPEDA's active role." W.T. Hebel, Wellsville, N.Y., asked for "more information in more newsletters" and that we "pay more attention to FIELD employees." He adds: "This inquiry is the best thing you've done -- do it oftener," and gives a "Hurray for the Participation Committee." J.K. Vessey (FS), Milwaukee, advises: "Keep plugging for members and keep prodding agency membership representatives -- including me." Mr. Vessey, consider yourself prodded! We are sending you extra newsletters and application forms to do more "plugging." They will also be sent to others who wish to do some "plugging."